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The REVIEW of RELIGIONS

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CONTENTS

- **Islamic Conception of Private Ownershi**
  —Hazrat Khalifatul Masih
- **How Muslims can Rise in the World**
  —Seth Abdullah Allah D
- **The Holy Prophet of Islam**
  —Maulvi Ataur Rahman, M A
- **Hazrat Ayesha's Age at the Time of he Marriage with the Holy Prophet**
- **Statistics of the Islamic World**
- **Some Questions Answered**
  —Syed Zain-ul-Abideen Wali Ullah Sha

QADIAN

آزادی

جان اسٹورٹ مل کی کتاب لبرٹی کا صحیح اور بامحاورہ ترجمہ جو سایات کے درس کا ایک اہم جزو ہے۔ مل انگلستان کے اُن ارباب فکر میں سے ہے جس نے اپنی بلند خیالی اور زور قلم سے یورپ کے اہل فکر میں اپنا لوہا منوالیا۔

مترجمہ

جناب سعید انصاری صاحب ایم اے (کولمبیا)

مقدمہ از پروفیسر محمد مجیب صاحب بی اے (آکسن)

قیمت عہ

مکتبہ جامعہ دہلی

معاہدۂ عمرانی

از ژاں ژاک رُوسو

مترجمہ ڈاکٹر محمود حسین خاں صاحب ایم اے۔ پی ایچ۔ ڈی

حریت، اخوت اور مساوات جس کا روحانی پیام دنیا کو اسلام نے پہنچایا تھا اس کی سیاسی تبلیغ یورپ میں روسو کے معاہدۂ عمرانی نے کی، روسو کا کمال یہ ہے کہ اس نے سیاست مدن کے دقیق مسائل باتوں باتوں میں سمجھا دئے ہیں۔ اس کی یہ کتاب جو معنوی حیثیت سے فلسفہ سیاست کی سب سے اہم کتاب ہے زبان اور طرز بیان کے لحاظ سے سب سے سہل ہے۔ قیمت عہ

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IF . . .

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

ISLAMIC CONCEPTION OF PRIVATE OWNERSHIP

[By Hazrat Khalifatul Masih]

Islam teaches that the whole universe, including the Earth, the Sun, the Moon and the Stars, has been created for the service and benefit of man. All these things, therefore, are, according to Islam the common property of all men. On the other hand, Islam lays down another principle, *viz.*, that God has created men to see how each of them acts, and that every man is by nature endowed with the faculty of competition and the desire to outstrip others in the race for progress. Islam itself encourages such competition by saying فاستبقوا الخيرات (البقرة)

"Compete with each other in good works." In a competition some men will deserve greater prizes than others, and some will deserve nothing at all. Islam acknowledges this disparity, nay, it claims that this disparity is a part of the Divine scheme of things and should not give rise to envy or jealousy. "Do not covet that in which God has made some of you excel others" (IV: 32, Quran). That is to say, this apparent inequality which God permits is not without

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its use and is indispensable for the proper working of the Universe. If those who work harder than others or can bring a superior intellect or higher business capacity into the conduct of their affairs are to be deprived of the just rewards of their labour, all this competition and striving after better results would cease and the world would come to a stand-still.

Islam, therefore, acknowledges the right of those who have earned greater rewards than others through superior intellect or greater industry, but on the other hand it reminds them of their duty to help their less fortunate brethren to come forward and participate in the blessings which God has bestowed on them. They are told that in the wealth which they have earned the poor have also a share, the latter should not be deprived of it. It should be enough compensation and happiness for the rich to provide for their poorer brethren who, in a sense, are equally entitled with them to the good things of life, and thus to manifest the Divine attribute of Providence. "Give to the poor out of the wealth which God has bestowed upon you," says the Quran, that is to say, "your wealth is a trust to the benefits of which the poor are entitled."

This would show that Islam encourages a spirit of competition and in order to foster this spirit, it permits people to retain that which they have honestly earned. But as all things in the Universe are the common property of all mankind, the poor have also a right in the wealth of the rich and the latter should, therefore, set apart a portion of their wealth in the nature of a royalty for the use and benefit of the poor.

This raises another important question. If it is necessary to encourage a spirit of competition among mankind, the competition must be open to all classes of men, and institutions and devices which limit such competition to a few individuals reducing the rest of mankind to the position of mere outside spectators ought to be abolished or reformed. Islam acknowledges the importance of this question and answers it in the affirmative. It has laid down instructions and directions

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by following which: (*a*) the spirit of competition is fostered and encouraged; (*b*) individual ownership is maintained, and those who are able to put forth greater industry and utilise a higher standard of intelligence are secured the fruits of their labour; (*c*) the share of those who have in any way contributed towards the production of wealth which is appropriated by the rich is secured to the former; (*d*) the door of progress is kept open for all mankind and admission is not restricted to the members of a particular family or class; the members of the lowest classes are afforded equal opportunities, along with the rest of the people, of attaining to the highest positions and dignities, and wealth and power do not become the hereditary monoplies of any particular class; and (*e*) the needs of all mankind continue to be satisfied. These directions are as follows:—

1. Islam teaches that all things in the Universe are the common property of all mankind, and that, therefore, there can be no complete individual ownership of anything.

A is the owner of his property, not in the sense that nobody else has any right in it, but in the sense that *A*'s share in it is larger than that of anybody else, for he has acquired it with his labour. Islam describes the share of the poor in the wealth of the rich as a right. "In the wealth of the rich," says the Quran, "such as can express their wants and such as cannot express them (*i. e.* animals) have a right." Again it says, "Give to your relatives, the needy and the wayfarer their rights" (30: 38). Islam, therefore, enjoins the distribution and circulation of wealth and prohibits hoarding, for this deprives people of their rights. Money must either be spent or invested; in either case it would be circulated to the benefit of the community, especially of the poorer classes. Concerning those who hoard money, the Quran says:

> "God is not pleased with proud and vain people who hoard up wealth and advise other people to do the same and hide that with which God has blessed them out of His grace. If they do not stop this practice and refuse to act

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on God's commands, a humiliating punishment will overtake them" (IV, 36, 37). That is to say, if they go on hoarding wealth and abstain from spending it, they and their people would be humiliated.

2. In order, however, to prevent people from spending the whole of their wealth on personal gratifications, Islam has put an end to all kinds of excess and indulgence. Islam prohibits extravagance in food, dress, houses, in short in every concern or department of life, and, therefore, a Muslim, who follows the injunctions of Islam, cannot possibly spend so much on his own person or personal gratifications, as to injuriously affect the righs of others in his property or wealth.

3. As it might be apprehended that, in spite of the direction to spend or invest money, some people would go on hoarding it, and thus deprive other people of their rights in it, Islam enjoins, that a tax of 2½ per cent. should be levied by the Government on all money, precious metals and merchandise, etc., which a man has been in possession of for one year or over, and that the proceeds of this tax should be spent for the welfare of the poor and the needy. The Holy Prophet (on whom be peace and the blessings of God) in explaining the object of this tax clearly indicates that it is levied on the rich, as the poor are entitled to a share in their wealth. He says:—

ان الله افترض عليهم صدقة توخذ من اغنيائهم وترد على فقرائهم

"God has made *zakat* obligatory; it must be levied on the rich and restored to the poor." The use of the word "restored" indicates that the poor have a right to this tax and that they are entitled to a share in the wealth of the rich. As their contribution towards the production of this wealth cannot be ascertained with precision, a definite rate has been fixed at which this tax is levied from all those who come within its purview. It should be noted that *Zakat* is not a mere tax on income, but is a tax on income and capital and in many instances may amount to nearly 50 per cent. of the net profits.

The Quran also indicates that the object of *Zakat* is to purify the wealth of the rich, that is to say, to separate

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from it the contributions made towards its production by the poor, and to leave that to which the assessee is exclusively entitled. By this institution Islam provides for the discharge of all those rights that the poor have in the wealth of the rich, and thus brings about a reconciliation between labour and capital, for, in addition to the wages which each labourer gets for his work, Islam levies a tax of 2½ per cent. on the total wealth of the capitalist for the benefit of the poor.

(4) *Zakat* offers a solution of the financial problem before us, but it leaves untouched the monopoly, enjoyed by certain classes, of all means of progress and development. Islam encourages people in the race of progress, and secures to them the first fruits of their diligence and industry, but it does not approve that one class of persons should bar the progress of other classes. Every man who runs in a race has the sympathy of the spectators, and people may admire him who runs the fastest, but nobody can approve the conduct of a runner who, having obtained a start in the race, obstructs the course of other runners in order to prevent them from outrunning him. Such conduct would put an end to all healthy competition and emulation, and the fortunate few who have obtained a start in the race for progress would henceforth monopolise all channels of progress and would exclude from them their less fortunate brethren.

Islam does not permit such a state of things and has, by making it impossible, thrown open the gates of advancement and progress to all classes of mankind. The causes that lie at the root of this evil may be classified under three heads:—(*a*) The rule of primogeniture, which involves impartibility of estates, and the unrestricted power of bequest by which personalty may be distributed according to the pleasure of the testator; (*b*) the institution of usury which enables one man or a few to accumulate huge sums of money in his or their hands, without labour of any kind, by the mere exploitation of the needs and misfortunes of others; and (*c*) excessive profits.

These three causes have, in many countries,

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deprived the common people of all means of progress. Property has accumulated into the hands of a few magnates, and the poorer class of people can, therefore, acquire no portion of it. The institution of usury or interest enables those people who have once established their credit to accumulate as much money into their hands as they can have any desire for, and people with small capitals can have no chance against them. Through the channel of excessive commercial profits wealth is pouring like a cataract into the vast coffers of a handful of capitalists. Islam suggests three remedies for these three causes which lead to a monopoly of property and wealth :—

(*a*) It enjoins the distribution of inheritance. No man has power to devise or bequeath the whole of his property to one man, so as to promote its accumulation into a few hands. Under the Islamic law of inheritance and succession a man's property must be distributed among his parents, all his children, his widow, brothers, sisters, etc., and no body can interfere with, or divert this mode of distribution. (*b*) It prohibits the giving or taking of interest which precludes the accumulation of wealth in a few hands. (*c*) Excessive commercial profits are kept in check *first* by the institution of *Zakat*, *second* by disallowing all such devices by which people obtain excessive profits. The formation of trusts, etc., for example, by which profit is unreasonably enhanced, have been prohibited and an Islamic Government would not permit it.

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HOW MUSLIMS CAN RISE IN THE WORLD*

[By Seth Abdullah Allah Din]

Analogy between Physical and Spiritual Laws

The all-embracing Providence has provided for man's spiritual needs, for the growth and development of his soul, in exactly the same manner as it has done for the growth of his body. This twofold provision for his evolution, regulated by two parallel sets of laws, has existed since the dawn of creation, and will continue to exist as long as the world endures.

As in the material universe we daily witness the working of God's law that day and night always come in alternation with each other, and that without the light of the sun there could be no day, nor, for that matter, could our eyes be of any possible use to us; so, indeed, in the spiritual world, it is a divine law that man,—the underlying purpose of whose existence is to conform himself to a high level of spirituality, with the ultimate object of attaining to union with God,—cannot hope to find his way out of the darkness besetting him, and gain to the Right Path Godward, unless and until the divine Providence, mercifully coming to his help, causes the spiritual sun to appear on the horizon, that is to say, He sends down a prophet or spiritual reformer to show him the way and guide him. No matter how wise one happens to be, he cannot afford to dispense with the light of the spiritual luminary any more than, in regard to his material eyes, he can possibily do without the light of the solar luminary of the physical world. Hence we find that there has not been a single people in any part of the world which, after it had become spiritually benighted, was not blessed with a spiritual sun, that is, had not had a divine messager raised for its guidance. It is in reference to this fact that God says in the Holy Quran :

* Translated into English by Mr. M. H. Taj.

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"There has not been a people anywhere in the world but a warner from Us passed among them" (35 : 24). That a God's prophet or messenger is in the nature of a spiritual sun is evidenced by the Quranic words which describe the Holy Prophet as being the "Bright Sun" of the spiritual heavens.

The Spiritual Sun Rises Frequently Accroding to Need

It must be likewise borne in mind that it is not consistent with God's law to raise a spiritual reformer among a people for once only, and thereafter to suffer them to drift rudderless, groping in perpetual darkness. On the contrary, as in the world of matter, the darkness of night is at last relieved by the light of day with the sun's return in the sky; in like manner, the spiritual night that gradually closes over the earth, following the passing away of a heavenly messenger, is once more replaced by the glorious light of day, with the advent of a new prophet in the world. God says in the Holy Quran: "Thereafter we caused our apostles and messengers to appear one after another in the world, but every time a people had a messenger raised among them they invariably rejected him" (33 : 46). People thus reject a divine messenger and oppose his mission, because the purity of doctrine and practice having departed from them they lapse into all manner of hetrodoxy of belief and practice to which they cling with all the tenacity of blind belief and smug satisfaction of ignorance. But all such good souls among them as are not blind of heart, and are amenable to reason and argument are slowly won over to the new faith.

Such has been the early history of every known religion in the world.

What Distinguishes a Living Religion From a Dead One

Every religion of any importance that ever came into the world had its origin in revelation, and owed its

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foundation to the instrumentality of some prophet of God. After the death of its founder, for the duration of its term of existence, as divine wisdom thought fit to assign to it, God safeguarded it against all error of belief and practice stealing into its teachings by raising among its followers periodical spiritual successors of the prophet who had founded it. When, however, its allotted span of life had run its course, God discontinued the sending of spiritual reformers, with the inevitable result that that religion became a dead letter, and its followers, departing from the worship of the one, true and living God, lapsed into all sorts of polytheistic beliefs and practices. A religion that has once died its natural death can never revive into life again, nor can it ever, to the end of the world, witness the advent of the divinely raised and inspired spiritual reformers among its followers.

Judaism, the religion of the Jews, forms the last of the world's great faiths that have died in this way. Founded by the great prophet Moses, it continued to produce inspired spiritual teachers and reformers for well over thirteen centuries. The last of these was Jesus. Since he passed away more than nineteen hundred years ago, not a single inspired reformer has made his appearance among the followers of Judaism. This is to be ascribed to the fact that Judaism has long ceased to be a living religion, and the Jews, having lost sight of the one true God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe, have taken to the worship of a multiplicity of alien gods.

Superiority of the Holy Prophet of Islam

God has exalted the Holy Prophet to the highest rank among the prophets and has given him the spiritual sovereignty over them all, and revealed through him a perfect, universal religion, which shall live for all time. To safeguard the purity of its teachings and to interpret its Law in the light of the needs of the times He has promised to raise from time to time spiritual Successors of the Holy Prophet, who would purge away what errors of belief and practice should have

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found their way among the Muslims. Says God in the Holy Quran: "God gives His word to those of you who are true believers and doers of good works that He will make them His vicegerents on earth, even as He made His vicegerents those who have gone before them, and He will strengthen for them their religion, which He has chosen for them" (Surah Noor: v, 55).

Now the question naturally arises as to when the appearance of the promised divine vicegerents is to take place in the world. Regarding this the Holy Prophet says: "At the dawn of every new century God will raise among the followers of Islam a person who will renew their religion." Accordingly, we find that at the beginning of every century a spiritual reformer has regularly made his appearance in the past, and will, we may well believe, continue to so appear to the end of the world.

Islam is the Only Living Religion

Now, judging by the criterion mentioned above, Islam is to-day the only true and living religion in the world, since it is the exclusive feature of Islam that inspired spiritual teachers and reformers make their periodical appearance among its followers, as was foretold by the Holy Prophet, and they remove the errors which creep into the beliefs and practices of the Muslims with the passage of time, present the teachings of Islam in their true and correct form, and effect an all-round religious reformation of the Muslim community.

Another criterion of the truth of a religion consists in the divine protection extended to its revealed scripture against all kinds of interpolations and changes in its text. For a changed scripture means a changed religion. Now we find that this criterion, too, is fulfilled only in Islam. For over thirteen and a half centuries the Holy Quran, the revealed Book of Islam, has enjoyed divine protection, so that it is at this moment in the self-same condition of textual purity as it was when first revealed to the Holy Prophet. God

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says in the Holy Quran: "Verily We alone have revealed the Quran, and We alone will safeguard it."

To sum up, as an evidence of its being a living religion for all time, and, further, in order to mark its incontestable superiority over all other faiths God has given Islam two characteristic qualties: (1) He himself looks after and preserves the integrity of its Scricpture, so that no errors, changes, or interpolations of any kind can possibly find their way into the body of its text. It is owing to this divine protection that, notwithstanding the fact that more than thirteen and a half centuries have elapsed since its revelation took place, the Holy Quran is in the self-same condition of textual purity as when it first came into the world. (2) In order to ensure a correct interpretation of the text of the Holy Quran and to explain the deep truths and profundities of meaning underlying its words, God has provided that after every hundred years a spiritual teacher or reformer shall appear among the followers of Islam. Ever since the advent of Islam such centennial reformers have regularly made their appearance in the past, and they will continue to do so to the end of the world. Now, besides Islam there is no other religion in the world whose scripture enjoys a similar divine protection or which witnesses the periodical appearance of inspired Teachers or reformers. Regarding the scriptures of other religions, we neither find that God ever promised to protect them, nor we see them in their original condition of purity. That Islam stands unique in regard to these two characteristic features is a fact which no one can gainsay, and it constitutes an irrefutable proof of the truth of Islam.

Present Sad Condition of Muslims

God says in the Holy Quran:

"Lay ye all a firm hold to Allah's Cord of Unity, and create no dissensions among yourselves." So long as the Muslims followed this divine injunction they were on the pinnacle of power and glory; but when they turned their backs upon it, they fell into decadence

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and all their greatness departed from them. To-day, instead of being one homogeneous community, they present the sad spectacle of being divided and sub-divided into an infinity of mutually hostile and antagonistic sects, that are forever wrangling and quarrelling with one another. And all this with the inevitable result that they have become hopelessly weakened, and are, in all spheres of life, dominated by their non-Muslim neighbours to such a degree that the latter are harassing them and subjecting them to bitter persecution in all matters, religious as well as secular. The Muslims, disunited among themselves as they are, are wholly powerless to adopt any effective measures of self-defence and hold their own against them. It is not because the non-Muslims have no religious differences among them. On the contrary, they have many such differences, but where their interests coincide, whether it is in the political field or in some other secular sphere, they readily set aside their differences and make a common cause among themselves. For instance, take the case of the Hindu community. As everybody knows, they have great and irreconcilable religious differences among them, but in all matters of common interest they sink all their differences and become united among themselves. Further, though they have many communal leaders among them, but where a common interest demands it, they willingly accept the dictatorship of one man, as of Mr. Gandhi, for instance, and thus succeed in gaining whatever objective they have set before them. As a result of this, success and prosperity attend them in all their undertakings. Flushed with success, some of the Hindu leaders have now at last gone so far as to make the bold resolve of making India purely a Hindu country. To this purpose they seek to force the Muslims to renounce their own religion and embrace Hinduism, or—to drive them bag and baggage from the country.

The Muslims' Imperative Need

If the Muslims continue to live in India, the designs of the Hindus are to reduce them to a state of servitude

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not materially differing from that in which for thousands of years they have held the unfortunate people called untouchables, but who were at one time the rulers of this country. To this nefarious end the Hindus are working day and night. Despite, however, the gravity of the situation, the Muslims are doing next to nothing to counteract the dark machinations and evil schemes of their fellow-countrymen. Nor, for lack of union among them, are they able to do anything. They have their leaders, but even these cannot agree among themselves and appoint one of them as a dictator, so as to cope with the present situation. Fully realizing as they do the desperate state in which they are, and their imperative need for a central authority, an all-India leader or dictator, round which the whole Muslim community might rally, but torn by sectarianism and communal animosities as they are, there is no chance of their accepting and following one common leader whose word might be a law unto them all. There is one and only one effective remedy which can cure all the ills of the Muslims, and it consists in their effecting a thorough transformation of their hearts. God says in the Holy Quran: "Allah changes not the outward condition of a people unless they have first changed their inward condition."

The hardest thing in the world to do is to effect the transformation of a human heart. Still more difficult is the task of transforming the hearts of a whole community, of an entire people. In fact, no human agency but God himself alone can bring about such a transformation; for, being the Creator and Sustainer of the entire universe, He knows best how to mould the human heart. For this reason God has reserved to Himself the task of effecting reformation of human communities and human societies. How savage and barbarous were the Arabs with whom our Holy Prophet, the spiritual sovereign of the two worlds, had to deal. Whenever any dispute or difference arose between two parties of men, rivers of blood would flow and the fighting would last for many generations

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before it would come to an end. But at last when, after a long period of opposition, they finally accepted the Holy Prophet and followed the teachings of Islam, all their fierce animosities disappeared and a deep and abiding friendship and brotherhood arose between them, and a great moral and spiritual change for the better took place in them, with the result that they became the torch-bearers of truth and reformers for the whole world.

(To be Continued)

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THE HOLY PROPHET OF ISLAM*

[By Maulvi Ataur Rahman, M.A.]

I feel deeply grateful to the organisers of this public meeting for having so kindly invited me to speak on this solemn occasion of the *Yaum-un-Nabi*. While, on the one hand, memorial meetings held in honour of the great master-teachers of the world are calculated to remind us periodically of the sublime ideals which they set up before us, on the other hand, they serve to cement the bond of friendship and amity as much amongst the members of the same community as between community and community. Urgent as the need of such meetings is in all times, it has become more so in these days when the relations between one religion and another, even between one sect and another of the same religion, have become definitely worse and more strained than they were ever so in the past. The demon of blind superstition, narrow bigotry and hidebound sectarianism is stalking over the land. Man is killing his fellow-man in the name of religion. He is legalising misdeeds of the blackest dye, and taking shelter under cover of religion. It is up to us, gentlemen, to set our foot Michael-like on the neck of this demon, and to proclaim to the wide world in no uncertain voice that it is not religion but its very prostitution that has brought hostility where friendliness should prevail, rancour and bitterness where cordiality and kindliness should reign supreme. It is up to the sensible section of every community—and happily there is no dearth of them—to give battle to the apostles of hate, and to point out boldly to the masses of the people, on whose susceptibilities and ignorance they delight in trading, that no true religion

*Being a speech delivered by Maulvi Ataur Rahman, M.A., Assistant Director of Muslim Education in Assam, on the occasion of the Prophet Day celebrations—*Ed.*

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has ever taught the lesson of intolerance and injustice, no true religion has ever set its seal of approval on a code of hate, no true religion can ever countenance acts of violence.

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight we have met together in this hall to pay our homage to the memory of that Apostle of Peace, that Divine Messenger who gave the world a religion which is to-day followed by millions of human beings spread over several continents. I assume that most of you are familiar with the land-marks of his eventful life. I do not, therefore, intend to take your time either by describing to you the life-history of the Holy Prophet, or by giving a catalogue of his precepts, or by estimating the intellectual and cultural benefits that Islam has conferred on humanity. It will be my humble endeavour tonight to show how Hazrat Mohammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) exerted himself to the utmost to bring about peace and harmony among men, and how, with the aid of the Divine Inspiration he received, he tried to establish a kingdom of heaven on earth, on the basis of the eternal principles of justice, benevolence and love.

The student of history is familiar with the hopeless state of things that prevailed in Arabia at the time when the Prophet was born. Judaism had been reduced to rigid formalism, the spirit of the religion having long disappeared leaving behind the dead letter over which the custodians of the Mosaic Scripture bitterly wrangled. Christianity, that noble religion brought down by the Prince of Peace, had dis-integrated into various 'churches', each excluding the other and all at war with one another. Buddhism had been thinned away into philosophical abstractions. Confucianism had fallen into hopeless decay. The pure and sublime religion of the Vedas had been reduced to sacerdotalism and had become unduly ritualistic. The political disintegration of the Byzantine and Sassanian empires only accentuated their religious disrintegration. Arabia, the native country of the Prophet, was a veritable desert morally and spiritually

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as it was geographically. The one thing needful in this scene of desolation was the appearance of a man clothed with the Holy Spirit, who would awaken man into a new consciousness of the fundamental unity of all religions and would rebuild the crumbling world. The Man of the Hour was undoubtedly the Holy Prophet Mohammad, may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him.

With his keen, discerning eyes the Holy Prophet observed how God's earth was being defiled by blasphemy and human wickedness. He was sorely troubled inwardly, and went into meditations, seeking illumination from on high. At long last, the illumination came to him in the cave of Hira. This was a startling experience. He was definitely overawed by the Holy Presence bearing the message. He hurries back to Khadijah, his loving wife, screaming, "Zammeluni, Zammeluni", 'wrap me up with a blanket'. He then little realised that the Namoos of Moses had descended upon him, and that the task of delivering the world of sin and iniquity was laid on his shoulders.

Re-integration of a world that had spiritually crumbled to pieces was a task of the greatest magnitude. He set about his task, fully convinced of his success. A careful study of his activities will show that his efforts towards the establishment of a new world order were determined by three main propositions:

1. All revealed religions are fundamentally agreed on the unity of God.

2. A religion that claims to be universal must have a thoroughly democratic foundation.

3. A universal religion must recognise the right of other religions to exist and function, and must be tolerant to them.

I propose to deal with each of these three propositions as briefly as possible.

To my mind, the most valuable contribution which the Holy Prophet made to the cause of world-peace

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was the full and frank recognition of the fundamental unity of all revealed religions in so far as they taught the absolute unity of the God-head. He summoned people to accept not a new religion but the same pure religion of complete submission to the will of One God which had been preached by the whole army of divine Messengers that had been raised in different ages amongst various peoples. He invited the Jews for instance in these terms. "O ye people of the book, come ye to a proposition which is common to ourselves and yourselves, that we worship none but Allah and associate none with Him, nor shall some of us accept others as lords save Allah." The Prophet called this essential religion of surrender to the will of the One True God, 'Islam', which is deprived from a word meaning 'peace'; and he defined Muslim as 'one from whom nothing but love flows to all'. It was the religion of Abraham, of Moses, of Jesus, in fact of all the prophets that came to the world from time to time. He recited the divine words from the Quran: "Say, O Muslims, we believe in Allah, and we believe in the revelation that has been sent down to us, and in the revelation that was sent down to Abraham, and in what was sent down to Ishmael, and in what was sent down to Isaac, and in what was sent down to Jacob, and in what was sent to the tribes; and we believe in the revelations given to Moses, and in the revelation that was given to Jesus, and believe in the revelations which were granted to all the prophets from their Lord. No difference do we make between any of them, and thus (having accepted all the prophets) do we enter the religion of Islam, resigning ourselves wholly to our God" (Quran 11. 132).

It will thus be easily seen that this new religion of Islam was essentially the old religion which had found expression in the unalloyed monotheism of Abraham, and therefore its acceptance did not really imply any break with the past. In his words of simple majesty the Holy Prophet likened this basic religion of pure monotheism to a massive edifice to build which all previous prophets had contributed their labours, till in

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the fulness of time his turn came to complete it.

From a similar point of view, the revealed scripture of the Muslims was styled as Muhaimin, *i.e.* 'the preserver of the previous scriptures' and 'the confirmer of what has gone before'. Elsewhere we read of the Holy Quran as 'a repository of the scriptures that taught righteousness'.

Obviously there was supreme need for emphasising the unity of God in those times. The world to-day is indebted to the Holy Prophet of Islam for having re-enthroned that great truth of the Unity of God in the hearts of men. Thinkers have given their testimony to this precious contribution of Islam. I will quote at least one such testimony. It is from Mr. C. F. Andrews, whom you all know. He writes:

> With respect to the Islamic doctrine of the Unity of God I have no such criticism to offer. That is a supremely uniting and not a dividing faith. One of the greatest of all blessings which Islam has brought to East and West alike has been the emphasis which at a critical period in human history it placed upon the Divine Unity. For during those Dark Ages both in East and West, from 600 to 1000 A.D., this doctrine was in danger of being overlaid and obscrued in Hinduism and in Christianity itself, owing to the immense accretions of subsidiary worships of countless saints and demi-gods and heroes. Islam has been both to Europe and to India in their darkest hour of aberration from the sovereign truth of God's unity, an invaluable corrective and deterrent. Indeed without the final emphasis on this truth, which Islam gave from its central position—facing India and facing Europe,—it is doubtful whether this idea of God as one, could have obtained that established place in human thought which is uncontested in the intellectual world to-day.

Let us now consider how the second proposition, *viz.*, a religion that claims to have the element of universality must have a thorough democratic basis, was developed and fitted into the framework of the Islamic faith. This was by far the most difficult thing for the Holy Prophet to achieve in a country like Arabia.

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The Arabs were noted for their social pride, and they jealously guarded the rights and privileges which attached to high birth and blood. Naturally this rent the society into endless divisions. Iron walls divided tribe from tribe, class from class, and even the nobility were graded into an oversensitive hierarchy. No marriage was socially recognised between an Arab and a non-Arab, contemptuously called 'Ajami' by the Arabs. The Prophet removed all these artificial barriers and set up another standard of nobility.

"Verily the noblest of you is he who is the most God-fearing" (Quran).

It was nothing less than a miracle that democracy was made a reality in course of but a few years. Each of the four prescribed institutions of worship, the Prayer, the Fast, the prescribed Alms, and the Pilgrimage was democratised both in letter and in spirit. Even in the present day one can see the prince and the peasant standing shoulder to shoulder in prayer in the presence of the Almighty. The underlying idea of the fast of Ramadhan is to create sympathy for the starving masses. This is apparent from the fact that if one is not able to fast he has to do the penance by feeding a number of poor people. The Zakat is an institution intended for improving the economic condition of the poor, and is a potent equalising factor. Democracy is visible in its best form at the time of the annual Pilgrimage. Muslims from all parts of the globe assemble at Mecca; the high and the low are all dressed alike in a snow white seamless apparel; they all participate in the worship of their one Maker; and all distinctions of colour, race or material conditions are totally effaced. While going round the Ka'ba in the crowd, the hem of the garment of Jabala, the convert king of Ghassan was crushed inadvertently by a commoner. Not used to this sort of conduct, he made it a grievance, and stated before the Caliph that in his country such an offender would run the risk of losing his life. He was promptly told that in Islam the law was the same for the king as for the peasant; and if he could not accept this position

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he was free to leave Islam; and this he did.

There may exist certain class distinctions in certain places; but it is the just pride of Islam that it has had so far not to face within its fold any serious problems of depressed or suppressed classes or untouchability.

The raising of the position of woman, and the high legal status which has been given to her by the Holy Prophet is well-known to lawyers; and by itself this may form a fit subject for an independent paper.

In the last Pilgrimage, when his death was drawing near, the Holy Prophet delivered his Sermon on the Mount; his last words, which he solemnly uttered, were:—

"Ye, Muslims, your lives and properties are sacred and inviolable. Treat your women with kindness and consideration, for ye have taken them on God's trust. Beware, feed your slaves with the food ye eat, and clothe them with the clothes ye wear. All of you are equal and all one brotherhood. The Arab has no superiority over the non-Arab; for all are from Adam, and Adam was made of clay. Hold ye fast to the ordinances of God, and ye shall never go astray."

Now, let me turn to the last proposition regarding the tolerant attitude of Islam towards other religions. The Holy Prophet did not rest content with merely expressing a pious wish that all communities should have the right to practise their religion. He definitely made tolertion into a law. The late Right Hon'ble Syed Ameer Ali has shown in his writings that Islam was really the first to recognise the principle of international morality.

In his lifetime the Holy Prophet scrupulously practised what he preached. The Christian deputationists from Najran, who were by no means friendly to him, were allowed to say their prayers in their own way in his mosque where they were accommodated for the few days of their stay in the city. They were subsequently granted a charter which secured to them

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free observance of their religion. Another important document was the charter granted to the monks of the monastery of St. Catherine. The measure of security it granted can be judged from what Ameer Ali writes:—

"By it the Prophet secured to the Christians privileges and immunities which they did not possess even under sovereigns of their own creed; and declared that any Moslem violating and abusing what was therein ordered, should be regarded as a violator of God's testament, a transgressor of His Commandments, and a slighter of His faith. He undertook himself, and enjoined on his followers, to protect the Christians, to defend their churches, the residences of their priests, and to guard them from all injuries. They were not to be unfairly taxed; no bishop was to be driven out of his bishopric; no Christian was to be forced to reject his religion; no monk was to be expelled from his monastery; no pilgrim was to be detained from his pilgrimage. Nor were the Christian churches to be pulled down for the sake of building mosques or houses for the Moslems. Christian women married to Moslems were to enjoy their own religion, and not be subjected to complusion or annoyance of any kind on that account. If Christians should stand in need of assistance for the repair of their churches or monasteries, or any other matter pertaining to their religion, the Moslems were to assist them."

The Jews, who were definitely hostile to the new faith, received the same liberal treatment at the hands of the Prophet. Ibn-i-Hisham, the historian, has preserved for us the charter granted by the Prophet to the Jews. It runs thus:

> "In the name of God, the Merciful and the Compassionate. Given by Mohammad the Prophet, to the Believers, and also to those who have made common cause with them. All these people will constitute one nation. The Jews who attach themselves to our commonwealth shall have an equal right with our own people to our assistance and good offices. The Jews of the

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various branches domiciled in Yathrib shall form with the Moslems one composite nation. They shall practise their religion as freely as the Muslims: the clients and allies of the Jews shall enjoy the same security and freedom."

The noble example of the Holy Prophet was followed by his successors. Caliph Omar, for instance, drew up a covenant for the protection of the religious rights of the Christians of Jerusalem. In the time of the Crusades, when excitement rose high, Saladin proved himself extremely tolerant to the Christians. "When the Mussalmans resumed their sovereignty over the Holy Land," Sir Thomas Arnold writes, "They extended the same toleration to the Christians as before, suffering them to purchase peace and quiet by the payment of the Jizya." The Jacobite Christians of Egypt and Abyssinia were allowed the same freedom to practise their religion as was enjoyed by others. 'Amr ibn 'As, the conquorer of Egypt, gave full religious freedom to the Christians.

The eight centuries of Moslem rule in Spain forms one of the brightest chapters in the history of mediæval Europe. There was never any serious attempt at forced conversion, no systematic persecution. Indeed, it has been rightly said that it was rather the Muslims' attitude of extreme tolerance towards the Christian religion that facilitated the rapid acquisition of Spain. The capitation tax was very light and it was collected by the Christian officials themselves. The Christian subjects were tried by their own judges and in accordance with their own laws. They were appointed to high and responsible offices of state, both civil and military. Intermarriages were not only allowed but definitely encouraged. Abdul Aziz, the son of King Musa married the widow of King Roderic. The daughter of Roderic and the sister of Pelagius married Moslem princes.

In Turkey the same spirit of toleration governed the actions of the Moslem conquerors. The charter of Mohammad II stands out as the Magna Charta of the Christian population living within the Turkish

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Empire. In that Charter Mohammad II proclaimed himself as the Defender of the Greek Church. It is an admitted fact that the Moslem rulers gave the Greek Church larger freedom than it had ever enjoyed under the Byzantine rule.

The Moslems were equally generous to those whom they did not regard as the people of the Book. The Holy Prophet of Islam gave distinct directions that the Zoroastrians must be treated exactly like the people of the Book. In fact the Zoroastrians generally enjoyed free excerise of their religion. Late Sir Edward Browne, an authority on Iranian history and literature, says: "Revolt was of course suppressed. Still it does not appear that the Zoroastrians as such were subjected to any severe persecution." Caliph Al-Mutasim, in 840, ordered an Imam and a Muazzin to be flogged openly because they had destroyed a fire-temple of the Zoroastrians in Sughd and had built a mosque in its place. The historian, Masudi, speaks of numerous fire-temples that existed in the 10th century in Iraq, Faro, Koman, Siestan, Khorasan, Azerbyjan and Aran, *i.e.*, in every province of Iran. Ibn Hawqal puts it on record that there was hardly any city in Iran in which Magians with their fire-temples were not found. The migration of Zoroastrians from Iran has been wrongly set down to Moslem persecution. Mr. G. K. Nariman, the well-known Parsi orientalist, has shown that the story of the whole-sale massacre and expulsion of the Zoroastrians from Iran is without historical foundation. Sir Edward Browne has given a similar testimony.

Moslem rule in India has been marvellously tolerant of the Hindu religion. Unfortunately, the historical works ordinarily available are more or less chronicles of war, and there is hardly any description given in them of the normal religious life of the time in India; but aberrations like acts of fanaticism or intolerance, since they attract public notice are invariably recorded, and often in a magnified form. Historians like Sir Jadu Nath Sarkar and sages like Sir P. C. Roy who have sifted the truth from a mass of falsehoods

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richly deserve our thanks.

Much has been said of the extra-territorial patriotism of the Moslems, and charge has been laid at their door that they never regarded India as their home. The charge does not stand critical examination. When the late poet Sir Iqbal sang, "*Chino Arab hamara, Hindustan hamara, Muslim hain ham, watan hai sara jahan hamara*" he never intended to stress the extra-territorial patriotism, but only wanted to show with what remarkable quickness the Moslems made the countries they conquered their lands of adoption. They intermarried amongst the conquered people, and soon made those countries their homes. That dream in marble, that marvel of architecture, the inimitable Taj, stands out to-day as an abiding testimony as much to the loving devotion of an emperor to his royal consort as to the recognition of this country by the Moslems as their own native home. Who will deny that the peace and happiness of the world, also its richness, depends neither on aggressive nationalism, nor on vague, indefinite, formless internationalism but on the harmonious adjustment of the claims of nationalism to international ideals? The Prophet of Islam, through his words and action, held up that glorious ideal before us, and made it clear that no nation, however cultered and civilized, was by itself complete and that the consummation or completeness devoutly wished for could come only by the fusion of differing cultures, by the welding together of conflicting ideals, by the adjustment of national aspirations to those subtle international forces that make for a better and happier world.

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HAZRAT AYESHA'S AGE AT THE TIME OF HER MARRIAGE WITH THE HOLY PROPHET

ONE of the very important historical questions in regard to Hazrat Ayesha is what was her age at the time of her marriage with the Holy Prophet. Much misunderstanding prevails as to what was Hazrat Ayesha's real age when she was married to the Prophet. One school of thought among the Muslims holds the view that Hazrat Ayesha was only 9 years of age when her marriage with the Prophet was consummated. This school bases their assumption on Ayesha's own statement recorded by the traditionist, Imam Bukhari, in his world-renowned collection of the Prophet's sayings which is known after his name. In the *Bukhari* at more than one place Ayesha is reported to have said that she was 6 years of age when she was betrothed to the Prophet, 9 years when her marriage took place, she lived with the Prophet for 9 years and was 18 when the Prophet died. Another school observes that the date of her betrothal has been mistaken for her date of marriage. They believe that Hazrat Ayesha was betrothed at the age of 9 and was married 5 years later when she was 14 years of age. The argument advanced by this school in support of their contention is that Hazrat Ayesha before her betrothal to the Holy Prophet was betrothed to Jabir, son of Muṭ'im. The inference is that if Ayesha was betrothed to the Prophet at the age of 6 or 7, she must have been betrothed to Jabir when she was 4 or 5 years old and this is too tender an age for a girl to be betrothed. The exponents of this view also contend that according to Ayesha's own statement she remembered the time when the verse :

بل الساعة موعدهم والساعة أدهى وأمر

" Nay, the hour is their promised time and the hour shall be most grievous and bitter " (54 : 46)

was revealed and since the Chapter 54, to which this

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verse belongs was revealed in the 6th year of the Call, Hazrat Ayesha must have been at least 5 years old when the verse was revealed, to be able to remember this fact. So they say that at the time of her *nikah* with the Prophet which took place in the month of *Shawwal* in the 10th year of the Call, she could not have been less than 9 years. Without presuming to contradict this view we suggest that the exact date of the revelation of the above-mentioned verse is as wrapt in mystery as the age of Ayesha at the time of her marriage. The contention that a period of at least one or two years between Hazrat Ayesha's betrothal to Jabir and the Prophet must have elapsed does not seem evidently to be very sound.

Our own view, however, about this controversial but none-the-less very important point is that Ayesha was ostensibly mistaken in calculating her age at the time of her marriage. An overwhelming majority of the historians accept the view that Ayesha was 7 years when she was betrothed to the Holy Prophet in the month of *Shawwal* in the 10th year of the Call. Some of them are undecided as to what exactly was her age at the time of her betrothal. They place it somewhere between 6 and 7. Even Hazrat Ayesha herself thinks that she was 6 or 7 when she was betrothed. Ibn Hishām and the author of *Sirat Halbia* are definitely of the view that Ayesha was 7 at the time of her *nikah*. Ibn Sa'ad says in his *Tabaqāt*

كانت عائشة ولدت السنة الرابعة من النبوة فى اولها

(*Tabaqāt*, part 8, page 54) *i.e.* Ayesha was born in the beginning of the 4th year of the Call. Khaula *bint* Hakim's suggestion that Ayesha should be betrothed to the Holy Prophet inclines us to the view that not only was she 7 when betrothed but that her physical development was extraordinarily rapid. Had not even the great majority of the historians and traditionists been in favour of the 7 years' view, considering Khaula's suggestion alone we would have thought that she was even much older than 7. Anyhow taking into consideration all these different circumstances we are definitely of the view that Ayesha was almost 7 if

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not exactly 7 when her *nikah* ceremoney was performed in the month of *Shawwal* in the 10th year of the Call. An overwhelming majority again of the historians – Zurqāni, 'Aini, Khamis, being most prominent among them—believe that her marriage was cousummated in *Shawwal* in the 2nd year of the Flight, that is to say exactly 5 years after her *nikah*. This leads us to think that she was 12 when she was taken into his house by the Holy Prophet. Considering the hot climate of Arabia in which girls acquire a tendency towards very early puberty and considering also the very rapid physical development of Ayesha, as is evident from the narratives quoted above, 12 years does not at all seem to be an unnatural age for the consummation of her marriage. By the way it might be remarked that Ibn Sa'ad places the consummation of Hazrat Ayesha's marriage in the month of *Shawwal* in the first year of the Flight. But ibn Sa'ad finds no corroborating and support from any source for his extraordinary view and the fact that he includes among his narrators *Wāqdi* about whose unreliability and immaturity of views there is a general agreement among the historians takes the ground from under Ibn Sa'ads feet and demolishes his view-point.

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STATISTICS OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD

THERE have been many attempts to estimate the numbers of Muslims throughout the world. Accurate statistical data are, however, lacking for many regions of the Islamic world. There has been, therefore, a great discrepancy between different estimates. Where official information is lacking rough calculations are worked out and the figures for populations are approximations.

Among the widely-known and frequently-quoted statistics are those drawn up by Louis Massignon in his *Annuaire du Monde Musulman* (Third Edition, Paris, 1929). Many of the figures he gives are, however, inaccurate and very much below the true estimates as given by official reports in many of the principal countries of Islam.

We give below a statistical survey (in more or less round numbers) of the world of Islam based primarily on the most recent official statistics where such are available (consulting several works: *The Statesman's Year-Book*, *Annuaire Statistique de la Société des Nations*, *Political Hand-book of the World*, etc.). Where official information is unavailable, an approximate estimate is rendered as complete as possible by data supplied by reliable sources.

The world distribution of Muslims shows that the majority are found in Asia. In Africa the followers of Islam outnumber many times those of all other religions and constitute over half of the total population. In Europe Muslims are found mainly in the Balkan States and in South Russia, numbering in all several millions. In the two Americas and in Australia there are some hundred thousands of Muslims.

Africa

Egypt	...	15,000,000
Anglo-Egyptian Sudan (Condominium)	...	5,000,000

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Tripoli (Libya Italiana)	....	1000,000
Tunis	...	2,335,000
Morocco (French Zone)	...	5,898,000
Algeria (French Colony, under the Jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior)	....	6,247,000
Morocco (Maghrab-al-Aqsa or Farthest West French Zone)	...	5,000,000
Spanish Zone	...	700,000
Tangier (International Zone), about	...	60,000
Senegal—over 80 per cent. Muslims	...	1,400,000
French Sudan : Non-desert	...	1,500,000
Desert Dwellers (wholly Muslims)	...	600,000
Upper (Haute) Volta	...	600,000
French Guinea	...	2,000,000
Ivory Coast (Estimated Number)	...	1,000,000
Dahomy	...	600,000
Togoland (The Peace Handbook)	...	500,000
The Comeroons (French Mandate)	...	1,000,000
The Colony of the Niger	...	1,200,000
Dakar and Dependencies	...	80,000
Mauritania (French) – This colony consists of the districts of Trarza, Bakna, Gorgol, Assaba, Guidimaka, Adrar, Levrier, Bay, Akjoujt and Tagant Population mostly Moorish Muslims	..	400,000
The Great Sahara, Socoto, Barna, Adamoua Ouadai (Estimate)	...	20,000,000
Gambia (Colony and Protectorate)	...	300,000
The Gold Coast (Colony, Ashanti and Northern Territories)	...	200,000
Serra Leone (Colony and Protectorate areas)	...	2,000,000
Nigeria (Northern and Southern Provinces)		11,000,000
Portuguese Guinea (Estimate)	...	300,000
Liberia	...	1,000,000
Rio de Oro (Population entirely Muslim)		70,000
Gabun (Estimate)	...	200,000
Middle Congo ; total population 660,564 (1934) Muslims about	...	400,000
Ubanji-Shari	...	120,000

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Chad Region : Muslim population estimated about	...	1,100,000
British Cameroons (Manuated Territory)		500,000
Cape Verde Island (Portuguese)	...	60,000
Angola (Portuguese)	...	1,000
South West Africa (Mandated Territory)		100,000
South Africa : Cape Province, Natal, Transvaal, Orange Free State, Basutoland, Swaziland, Northern Rhodeshia, Southern Rhodeshia	...	150,000
Portuguese : East Africa—Mozambique	...	1,000,000
Bechuanaland (British)	...	50,000
Belgian Congo	...	200,000
Nyasaland (British)	...	500,000
Reunion Islands (French)	...	5,000
Madagascar (French) estimated number of Muslims	...	800,000
Island of Mauritius (British)	...	100,000
Seychelles Islands (British)	...	5,000
Zanzibar (British Protectorate) and Pemba		400,000
Kenya Colony and Protectorate	...	2,000,000
Tanganyika Territory (lately German East Africa)	...	1,000,000
Uganda protectorate (British)	...	1,000,000
British Somaliland (Wholly Muslim)	...	350,000
French " " "	...	230,000
Italian " " "	...	1,010,000
Eritrea (Italian Colony)	...	330,000
Abyssinia (Ethiopia) Italian, figures uncertain : Rough estimate 50% Muslims		5,000,000

EUROPE

Albania, over 80% Muslims	...	800,000
Yugoslavia about	...	1,750,000
Bulgaria	...	780,090
Rumania (1934)	...	260,000
Greece (1928)	...	180,000
Poland and Lithuania, about	...	12,000
Finnland, about	—	3,000
Hungary, about	...	3,000
France about	...	200,000

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Great Britain, about	...	30,000
Belgium	...	5,000
Holland, Germany, Austria	...	6,000
Italy, Spain	...	6,500
Cyprus	...	65,000
Rhodes	...	15,000

ASIA

Turkey	...	15,000,000
Syria and Lebanon	...	3,000,000
Palestine, the estimated population in 1935 was 1,261,000 of whom the number of Muslims was	...	825,000
Transjordon	...	400,000
Iraq	...	3,000,000
Sa'udi Arabia (Hejaz, Najd, Dependencies) Oman, Yemen, Koweit, Hadarmout, approximately	...	12,000,000
Bahrain Island (Estimate)	...	120,000
The Six Trucial States (Shargah, Ras-al-Khaimah. Um-ul-Qawain, Ajman, Debai, Abu Debai), about	...	150,000
Aden and Perim	...	51,000
Qatar, about	...	30,000
Socotra	...	12,000
Iran	...	15,000,000
Afghanistan	...	10,000,000
India	...	82,000,000
Borneo (British)	...	270,000
Brunei	...	33,000
Sarawak	...	120,000
Ceylon	...	600,000
Baluchistan	...	820,000
Straits Settlements (British Crown Colony) estimate	...	800,000
The Unfederated Malay States, estimated at		1,100,000
Siam, Muslims about	...	600,000
China	...	50,000,000
Tibet (estimate)	...	10,000
Manchukuo	...	2,000,000
Inner and Outer Mangolia	...	3,000,000
Netherland (Dutch) Indies	...	5,50,00,000

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Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, Russia; Muslims in Asian and European Russia have a total of about	...	30,000,000
French Indo-China	...	500,000
Japan	...	1,000

AMERICA

North America	...	100,000
South America	...	400,000
Philippine Islands, Australasia and Oceania	...	2,000,000

In view of the fact that in many regions, especially in Africa, no statistics are available, and that in many cases the given satistics, are incomplete, covering only a portion of the territory and that in other cases estimates are based upon old statistics it may be safely assumed that there are about 400 million Muslims in the World.

—*Islam in the World*

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SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED

(By Syed Zain-ul-Abideen Wali Ullah Shah)

Q. The modern philosopher with the suggestive aid of modern sciences emphatically declares that prophethood and all that it meant and stood for were only methods devised by wise men of old to keep man in the earlier stages of his mental and moral development within proper bounds and to teach him how to live and conduct himself and that these methods are no longer needed now since man has become civilized and his circumstances have changed. He asserts that the fact that religion has actually lost all its beneficial influence on the lives of individuals as well as social bodies supports and corroborates his theory and prepares us for looking after something useful that should be a better substitute for this futile and obsolete method called Religion.

A. This question requires to be dealt with a little at length, as it is the most important of all religious problems of the day. A wrong understanding of the evolution theory which sometime back startled the whole world but which has now ceased to excite men's imaginations because it has lost its novelty, is evidently responsible for raising such doubts in the minds of educated men as to the passing away of Religion as the most important factor in influencing favourably the character and nature of man. It is one thing to assert that Religion has ceased to be a great force and an indispensable instrument for the moral and spiritual evolution and advancement of man and quite another to prove and substantiate it in the light of actual facts. There is implanted in human nature an instinctive hankering after a revealed code of social, moral and spiritual laws for man's guidance on the path towards the great and noble goal for the achievement of which he was created; and this hanker-

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ing is too pronounced and irresistible to be smothered or killed by any change in human circumstances. No human philosophy, no scientific discoveries, no spread of knowledge and learning can afford to deny its existence. It penetrates the innermost depths of man's nature and thoroughly permeates his whole organism. The response of human nature to the dictates of Religion is so complete that one can with as much certainty predict about the effects that are produced on the character of man when he begins to act upon the commandments of Religion as a chemist can about the actions and reactions of various elements on one another. No sooner a man becomes imbued with religious spirit than he begins to move on the right path and works in perfect harmony with the laws of nature. He does not, then, stand in need of the aid and assistance of other influences to smoothly march to the furtherance of his spiritual goal. The influences of education and other circumstances on human nature are very limited as compared with the influences on it of Religion. Without the help of Religion the influences of education or even of environments and surroundings in the direction of morally and spiritually improving a man are no guarantee for insuring that sort of reaction on human nature which is both intrinsic as well as intensive and extensive in its effects. These things fail to have any appreciable effect upon his character without the help of Religion. They possess only an influence of very superficial character. They cannot penetrate into or permeate the whole nature of man as Religion does. This irresistibleness of the appeal of Religion to human nature is so natural, evident and tangible that even our modern philosopher cannot blind himself to it; and this fact alone is sufficient to establish the unreality and unsoundness of his theory. He must first prove by incontestable evidence that not Religion but other circumstances exert greater influence upon his nature and character and that Religion has now ceased to be as effective as it used to be in influencing man's character, his habits, customs, manners, social relations, moral and spiritual progress. After he has proved

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this then he can proceed with honesty and propriety to suggest another substitute for Religion that may claim to influence man's character as strongly and effectively as Religion does. The Holy Quran refutes very strongly the modern philosopher's above-mentioned theory. It says :—

> "Then set your face upright for religion in the right state—the nature made by God in which He has made men; there is no altering of God's creation. That is the right religion but most people do not know. Turn to Him, and be careful of your duty to Him." (30 : 30).

The Arabic word *anaba* that occurs in this verse refers to man's complete submission to God's will and total resignation to His decrees. That is to say when man becomes electrified with religious spirit his submission to Divine will—natural laws—is complete and voluntary.

People, generally, are misled as to the purpose and influence of Religion on man's nature and character by the corruption that they see, at present, prevalent in religious organisations and among those who profess to believe in and practise Religion. They are also deceived by the aversion that is generally felt towards religion but that is the result of the lack of right thinking and looking deep into the reality of things. To conclude from the depravity and demoralization that is now so widespread that Religion has lost its use or that the circumstances of man have changed to an extent which warrants the searching out of another substitute in place of Religion is evidently very shallow thinking and poor reasoning. To say that man can now properly look after his moral health without the aid and assistance of Religion and to admit in the same breath that the influence of Religion has weakened and immorality and corruption have spread is a contradiction in terms. The very fact that moral depravity and spiritual turpitude are so widespread because the commandments of Religion are ignored or are believed to have ceased to be of any use establishes the need and importance of Religion. The

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truth is that with all the progress and advancement that man has made he cannot afford to ignore the behests and injunctions of a true revealed religion, if morality and spirituality mean anything to him.

Q. Faith, whether in God or in a stone, has natural effects of its own controlled by psychic laws. We know of certain persons who, when sick, bind on their arms pebbles taken from the tombs of the persons whom they look upon as saints and holy persons and are cured of fevers and pains, and this fact leads us to the following conclusion :—

Religious belief or faith is a mental phenomenon which has no relation whatever with the belief that God exists or with the reality and sanctity of the things believed in.

A. To conclude from the fact referred to above that there is no such thing as God is indeed very poor logic. What can only be proved by the above instance is that man's mind is a self-controlling agent and that faith is one of the elementary factors that help it in adjusting its own machinery and that man sometimes errs in attributing certain results to causes other than real. To go further than this would lead us into an absurd position. Faith is an important factor that concerns every department of human life and is not confined to religion alone. It plays as important a part in other walks of man's life as it does in religion. Belief works wonders not only in spiritual life but in the physical side of man also. Have a firm belief that you will succeed in what you have put your hand and all your mental forces will come into action. When you begin to believe that you must succeed in your undertaking and a commotion is caused in your mind by a firm conviction in regard to a certain affair, all your mental powers and faculties become automatically and simultaneously become applied to give your belief and conviction a practical shape. But it would be a manifest mistake to conclude that because faith works wonders in every department and sphere of human activities, and is responsible for man's success in life, therefore, faith in God and in stone must be equal and

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similar; nor would it be sensible to say that because man sometimes errs in determining the real cause of the success and failure of what he does, he is, therefore, also mistaken in believing God as the Final Cause. There exists no analogy between these two cases and no ground for a general conclusion.

If we were to allow this sort of generalization as basis of reasoning, one might as well disbelieve even the existence of light, heat, and the very sun from which they proceed, and safely declare that all the phenomena of life are but subjective states of man's own mind; for instance, it is our experience also that in very hot weather one might shiver with cold owing to malarial attack, the sun itself might seem to him as cold as a lump of ice. Similarly, one might feel a burning heat in the coldest weather. There are animals which see clearly and distinctly in stark dark, and are light blind at day time. Light of the sun is darkness for them. Will you then say that the forces of the outer world and its phenomena have no reality in themselves except what we think and feel and that everything is but a deception of our own senses? Surely you will regard it as clear nonsense and reject it outright. The very fact that all the phenomena of life fall under the category of mental states proves them to be something real. Similar is the case of religious faith. That it is also a state of the mind does not show and prove it to be only an unreal product of the mind but on the contrary establishes its reality.

This is one side of the question. Now let us look at it from another point of view. Do the religions of the prophets have us believe in God as a matter of faith only or there is some reality and substantial and palpable grounds and bases to justify the demand of such a belief in God. The Holy Quran, while denouncing the deities other than one God and refuting the idea of the supposed beneficial influences they can exert on man's life, deals with the whole subject in a beautiful manner and on the basis of actual, established and proved facts and not merely on the ground only of belief. It pertinently demands from the unbelievers

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and those who believe in deities of sticks and stones whether they are convinced that these deities hear and accept their prayers and respond to them. The question whether they have the power to benefit or harm is only a secondary one. The first is to be sure of their very existence. The Quran says: "Do they hear you when you call them or do they harm or benefit you in any manner" (Quran). Again referring to the idol of clay which was made by the followers of Moses for worship, the Quran says, "Don't they see that it does not speak to them."

These verses clearly show that unless there be some positive and irrefutable proofs to establish its reality and soundness no hypothesis, whatever its basis, can stand to reason and is acceptable. The Prophets have us believe in God not as a matter of faith only but because they are positively and perfectly convinced on the basis of concrete, solid, sure and incontrovertible grounds that He *is* that they call upon us to believe in Him. They hear His voice as distinctly and as surely as they hear the voice of any person with whom they talk. He manifests Himself through them. He reveals to them His will, His secrets, not in ambiguous and equivocal phrases which are susceptible of being construed in any way but in very positive and definite terms. Their belief is laughed and jeered at. The message they bring is spurned and rejected and what prophecies they make and what truths they tell us are regarded as impossible of happening because their prophecies apparently seem to be something the occurrence of which the limited understanding of man looks upon as lying outside the confines of possibility. But soon the impossible becomes possible and what the people of this world regarded as the vapourings of an agitated brain assumes the form of actuality and reality. The sons of darkness begin to see the light of truth. Their eyes are opened.

It is in such a God that the Prophets and Divine Messengers would have us believe. Such a God is not the creation of our own minds or its existence a matter of faith only. He it is who created us and endowed us

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with a mind which controls all our actions, all our ideas and thoughts and gives purpose and meaning to what we do and pursue in life. To this characteristic quality of the mind the Quran refers when it says: "God has made subservient to you the boats that ply in the seas with His permission; He made subservient to you the rivers and made subservient to you the sun and the moon, the night and the day and He gave you whatever you asked from Him, and if you begin to count His favours you will not be able to count them."

In fact, the whole nature around us is a source of countless blessings to us because we are given a mind of unique and subtle mechanism, the controller and the regulator of man's Life. The value, use and the meaning of the sun, and the moon, the day, and the night and every thing in the vast nature would have been lost to us had it not been for this wonderful sample of Divine handiwork, *i.e.*, mind. In the Creator and not the creation of this mind we believe, and Him alone we adore and worship and call all the nations of the earth to join us in singing His pæans and praises.

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